

**Meeting Notes
Tenant Work Group
Tuesday, August 18, 2009
6:30-8:30 pm
Executive Conference Room
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850**

Work Group Members in Attendance: Matt Losak (Chair), Maureen Ross, Harrietta Kelly, Rick Nelson, Dale Tibbets, Guy Johnson

Via Conference Call: Lesa Hoover, Parag Khandhar, Felicia Eberling, Alice Wilkerson

Staff Participants: Ira Kowler (IMPACT Silver Spring), Debbie Spielberg (Councilmember Marc Elrich)

Agenda

- Committee 3 Update
- Other Updates
- Survey Report
- Other Business
- Public Comment

Notes:

Matt Losak called the meeting to order at 6:37pm.

Parag Khandhar reviewed the updates to the Committee 3 report. Issues 1 and 2 were quickly reviewed. The Committee integrated recommendations from prior meetings, including a 311 Service and outreach efforts. Debbie Spielberg confirmed that there is good overlap between Committees 2 and 3 reports.

Matt proposed a “new tenants meeting/orientation” that could be regularly offered by the County. Rick Nelson claimed this concern is addressed by the requirement to give out Landlord-Tenant Handbooks. Lesa Hoover stated there is also a section on the website that can help with orienting new landlords.

Debbie asked what vital documents must be translated. Parag replied that it is unclear, but recommendations should stress that the more documents translated, the better. Matt proposed that the Work Group can establish categories of documents to be translated such as health/safety documents, lease documents, and the Landlord-Tenant Handbook. Rick observed the cost is likely to be high for translation, but it should not stop the recommendation.

Under Issue 2, the Work Group reviewed recommendations that were adjusted regarding tenant advocacy. Rick wondered if the Group was recommending that OLTA be restructured or just that restructuring be considered and the office should be more ‘tenant friendly’? Debbie

proposed the language that the “work group proposes that the structure of the OLTA be reviewed and its role be properly defined.”

Issue 3 provided background on the laws and needs for language access services. Matt was concerned the recommendation shouldn’t expand the issue past renters. Parag stated that the work group can make recommendations about specific proposals for federal funding, but Rick was concerned that it would end up becoming an unfunded mandate. Agreement that the issue would be left in committee findings and addressed during final report formulation.

Recommendations stressed that County agencies should create detailed language access plans. Rick pointed out that trainings do exist in the County and are on-going though HOC might need more work. Parag noted that the recommendations could then serve as a benchmark for future efforts.

Dale was concerned that Issue 3 is far more detailed than the rest of the report but Matt noted it will be pared down in the final writing.

Debbie reviewed the Committee 2 report updates. Article II recommendations were not changed dramatically but included the idea of identification number for complaints. Article IV had no major changes. Standard leases became a complex issue because there are different leases for different types of properties. Model leases exist in HOC, HUD, etc. but they all vary. Rick suggested a way to standardized provisions for the lease. Lesa agreed there should be standard formatting. Matt agreed, but also felt standardized content was also necessary.

Committee 2’s code inspection recommendation is contradictory and already done by DHCA. Rick suggested the recommendation instead should focus on inspector’s work.

Survey has 500 responses. Bulk of responses will come mid-next week. Slightly low response rate for now. Matt is in conversations with the public affairs office for outreach and NPR picked up the story.

Next Meetings:

September 15th 6:30pm-8:30pm

September 29th 6:30pm-8:30pm

No public comment.

Matt ends meeting at 8:27pm.